

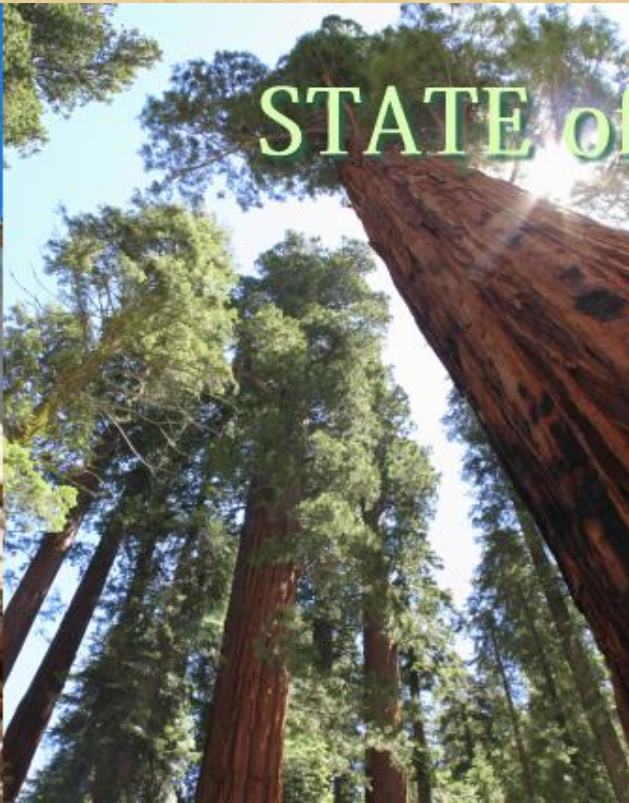
# California-Mexico Relations

From  
CRISIS  
to  
COMPROMISE  
(and everything in between)

**Ricardo Martinez Garcia**

Deputy Secretary for  
Environmental Justice , Tribal and Border Affairs  
**State of California**

# CALIFORNIA



STATE of CALIFORNIA





# Republic of Mexico



# **The Border Region - Uniqueness**

- Region of diversity and vastness
- Busiest Border Crossing in the world
- Unique challenges of the border area which require special responses
- Implementation of effective communications and risk management efforts are vital to maintaining safety, security and continued trade and good relations.

# Inception of California-Mexico Relations

- From crisis to ongoing compromise
  - California border relations have existed for many years, but had a significant shift in efforts due to crises and continue
  - Cases in point:
    - The 1992 Pesticide Drift incident in Mexicali
    - Near explosion in Tijuana sewers (New Year's Eve)
    - H1N1 Outbreak (The 1AM Call)
    - California wildfires
    - The Mexicali Earthquake



# Outreach Efforts

- Triggered by cause and effect
- Quickly realized a protocol at three levels of government was needed
- Efforts needed to be well coordinated at the highest level through
  - Personal Relationships
  - Border Governor's Conference
  - Legislation
    - California-Mexico Border Relations Council
    - California Border Environmental Health Fund
    - New River Improvement Project

# Making Progress

- Current outreach and communication efforts are progressive and proactive steps forward, but we need more.
- Need better preparedness to address security, fast response, ability to cross goods and personnel without hindrance
- Where do we go from here?

# What's Needed?

- Safety & Security are of utmost importance
  - Law enforcement and emergency responders across the border need to maintain similar communication networks to be able to speak to one another.
  - Need to respond quickly and efficiently in the event of a catastrophe
  - Need more formal policy and procedure on cross-border information sharing & technology transfer (streamline this process)



# How Do We Implement?

## How Do We Communicate?

- Personal experiences
  - What 22 years in state service have taught me.
- Psychology of Communicating
  - What is “Mitigated Speech”? How does it relate to crisis communications?
  - Is it a factor in the fusion of two cultures?
  - Dutch Psychologist “Hoefestede” and his “Power Distance Index” dimension.

# The Power Distance Index

- The Power Distance Index dimension has common question to gauge it:
  - How frequently does the following problem occur? Subordinates being afraid to express disagreement with their superiors?
  - How much are older people respected and feared?
  - Are power holders entitled to special privileges?
  - To what extent do the less powerful members of an organization accept and expect that power is distributed unequally?
- What are Low & High Power Distance Countries?
  - The top five countries with High PDI
    - Brazil , S. Korea, Morocco, Mexico, Philippines
  - The Five lowest PDI countries
    - US, Ireland, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand

# Uncertainty Avoidance

- How well does a culture tolerate ambiguity?
- These countries are MOST reliant on following rules and plans regardless of a situation:
  - Greece, Portugal, Guatemala, Uruguay, Belgium
- These countries are LEAST reliant on following rules and plans:
  - Hong Kong, Sweden, Denmark, Jamaica, Singapore



# Transmitter & Receiver Orientation

- Transmitter Orientation: Considered the responsibility of the speaker to communicate ideas clearly and unambiguously.
- Receiver Orientation: Is when the listener is to make sense of what is being said. In the speakers mind, he has said a lot.
- Let's use some examples

# Examples

- There is a saying in Mexico” Al Buen entendedor pocas palabras” – *A good listener will require few words*. However, this is not always the case and could be vital when communication in a crisis and when communicating to another country.

# Examples (continued)

- Example of communication between a subordinate and his superior in a country with a high PDI:
- Boss- It's cold and I'm kind of hungry
  - Meaning- Why don't you buy me a drink or something to eat?
- Employee- How about having a glass of wine?
  - Meaning – I want to buy you a glass of wine.
- Boss- It's okay, don't bother.
  - Meaning- I will accept your offer if you repeat it.
- Employee- You must be hungry, how about going out?
  - Meaning- I insist upon treating you.
- Boss- Shall I do so?
  - Meaning- I accept.
- This is a great conversation. Its subtle, it's civilized, it doesn't permit insensitivity or indifference.
- Exchange only works when the listener is capable unwinding and deciphering each other's meaning.
- It doesn't work during an emergency or crisis.



# Where Do We Go From Here?

- Communication and cooperation during peace must be just as good as during times of crisis.
- We must all work collaboratively to ensure utmost respect for our differences in customs and culture.
- Room for improvement
- Currently working on an MOU Compact between border states

# COMPACT MOU

- Determine emergencies the States may at some time have to face jointly, whether caused by natural disaster or technological hazard, by accident or in a civil emergency caused by a paucity of resources;
- Review individual emergency plans and develop a plan to determine mechanisms of interjurisdictional cooperation;
- Provide mutually cooperative warning systems for unforeseen emergencies among established border region communities;
- Within the limits established by the relevant internal legislation, protect and secure delivery of medicine, water, food, energy and oil; search and rescue services, rescue equipment and resources, and
- Jointly agree on interjurisdictional processes for providing and delivering human and material resources, along with other processes for reimbursement or donation.







# CONTACT

Ricardo Martinez

California EPA

1001 I. Street, 25<sup>th</sup> Floor

Sacramento, California 95812

(916) 324-7316

[rmartinez@calepa.ca.gov](mailto:rmartinez@calepa.ca.gov)